

HB 327 -- SENIOR FARMERS' MARKET PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Morris

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Agriculture Policy by a vote of 9 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill establishes the Missouri Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. The Department of Health and Senior Services, through a federal grant program with the USDA Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, will provide low-income seniors at least 60 years of age or older with vouchers from county designated distribution sites that may be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agricultural programs.

This bill is the same as HB 2331 (2016).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that many seniors live on a fixed income and cannot afford fresh fruits and vegetables. In 2014, one in five seniors went hungry. This bill would help seniors afford fresh produce from farmers' markets across the state.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Morris; Mary Chronister; Elisa Bedsworth, Missouri Farmer's Market Association; Kansas City Healthy Kids and Cultivate KC; Area Agencies on Aging; Missouri Community Action Agencies; Empower Missouri; Jackson County Legislature; American Heart Association; and Edward Smith, Missouri Coalition For the Environment.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.